

## CELEBRATION AND CONSULTATION: FROM “EDINBURGH 1910” TO “TOKYO 2010”

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### Introduction

The Tokyo 2010 Global Mission: Consultation & Celebration held at Nakano Sun Plaza, Tokyo, May 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, 2010 was a centennial celebration of the Edinburgh 1910 Missionary Conference which was an historical event attended by leaders of every major mission agency of the time. John R. Mott the Conference chairman called it: “the most notable gathering in the interest of the worldwide expansion of Christianity ever held, not only in missionary annals, but in all Christian annals.”<sup>1</sup> As observed by a reporter/participant, Edinburgh 1910 was “The gathering of missionary specialists, in the main, who come together to exchange views on the ways and means of executing the Lord’s command to preach the gospel to the whole creation.”<sup>2</sup> And according to church historian Kenneth Scott Latourette, “The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910, was the birthplace of the modern ecumenical movement.”<sup>5</sup>

The theme of Tokyo 2010 was “Making Disciples of Every People in Our Generation” and the focus was “making of disciples of all nations” throughout the 5-day consultation and celebration with more than 2,000 mission leaders representing 140 countries. It was a reminder that evangelical believers were Kingdom workers of God to keep up the effort of carrying out the Great Commission. It was sponsored by three major networks and 16 evangelical mission organizations/entities.<sup>3</sup>

### Celebration and Public Meetings in the Evening

Tokyo 2010 began with Opening Ceremony and Celebration on May 11 when delegates from more than a hundred nations marched in with banners and flags with colorful costumes and impressive performance in music, dance, drama, etc. The Closing Celebration was also at night, on May 14 with

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<sup>1</sup> Cit. C. Howard Hopkins, *John R. Mott 1865-1955: A Biography*, Geneva and Grand Rapids: WCC and Eerdmans, 1979, p. 342.

<sup>2</sup> Statement in “The World Missionary Conference” by Charles Clayton Morrison (editor of the *Christian Century* for decades) (<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=471>) – retrieved May 22, 2010. For more details of Edinburgh 1910, see Ken Ross, *Edinburgh 2010: Springboard for Mission*, William Carey International University Press.

<sup>3</sup> The three major networks were: Third World Missions Association, Global Network of Mission Structures, CrossGlobal Link and the 16 mission organizations including mission associations of Korea, Philippine, India, Nigeria, Ghana, Japan, Asia; US Center for World Missions; The Mission Exchange, etc.

outstanding programs, ceremonial reconciliation of Japanese aggression in neighboring countries,<sup>4</sup> presentation to a dozen outstanding mission statesmen, etc.

The celebration aspect was well organized by the host committee constituted of leaders of Japanese churches and mission organizations. All evening sessions were coordinated by the Japanese church and mission community.

### **The Morning Plenary Presentations**

All the plenary papers were insightful because the presenters were knowledgeable of the respective subjects that the program committee assigned. It began with Dr. David Cho's "Kingdom Mission: DNA of the Missionary Task" and ended with Enoch Wan's "Global Peoples and Diaspora Missiology." All the plenary sessions were both rich in content and challenging. Unfortunately, due to time limitation there was no provision for questions and discussions.

About ten plenary sessions were scheduled in the three mornings and the presentation on "Reaching the Secular Peoples of Europe" by the Swedish professor Dr. Stefan Gustavsson was impressive in tone and spirit. With figures and facts, the speaker reported the decline of Christianity in Europe quantitatively and qualitatively to confirm that the center of gravity of world Christianity had indeed shifted to the global South from the West and the North. It was in Europe that Edinburgh 1910 took place and launched the program of "making disciples of every people in our generation." However, the church in the West lost her soul in the last few decades and lost her way due to multiple factors, including secularization and affluence, consumerism and confusion of various religio-philosophical frameworks. At the end of the session, delegates rose from their seats and loudly cried out to God in prayers, petitioning for spiritual revival in Europe.

In the last plenary on May 14, all delegates heard the presentation of two new paradigms (i.e. diaspora missiology and relational paradigm) and offered an action prayer pertaining to the "heart, head and hand" of Christian mission. It is a call for departure from Western programmatic, managerial mission and a call for repentance for misguided priority which should be "heart→head→hand" (being, strategizing and doing). From Tokyo 2010 onward, we shall return to the personal and relational way of the Triune God in "God's mission" (*missio dei*) and be open to the new way of engaging in "diaspora

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<sup>4</sup> The ceremonial reconciliation was somewhat controversial. One line of thought is that it being inappropriate in the context of Tokyo 2010 - a mission consultation; whereas the opposite view - the power of the gospel was publicly demonstrated and reconciliation in Christ - former enemies can embrace each other with love and forgiveness. When Japanese delegates stood up to confessing the sin of aggression and brutalities, colonizing Korea and other nations in South East Asia, in response American delegates also got up to the stage confessing their sin of dropping atomic bombs on two Japanese cities killing many innocent Japanese. The scenario was perceived by some as overwhelmingly powerful; yet others felt it was confusing, embarrassing and unnecessary.

mission” (ministering to and through the diaspora – people on the move). God is moving people geographically and spiritual so the Church should follow the moving of the Spirit accordingly.<sup>5</sup>

### **Workshops and Task Forces in the Afternoon**

Stimulating workshops, new models and regional coordination were planned for the three afternoons to encourage active participation by delegates in world mission and post-conference action regionally. All the workshops were very relevant and were in line with the theme of the consultation. The topics were very interesting and one would have been benefited from all of them. Perhaps their availability at the website and upcoming published compendium will help all of us to expand our horizons and be motivated to take action by dozens of seasoned workshop leaders.

### **Declaration and Continuation**

Though Tokyo 2010 was co-sponsored by a dozen mission organizations; the “Tokyo 2010 Declaration” entitled “Making Disciples of Every People in Our Generation” was endorsed and signed by representatives of more than two dozen mission organizations/entities at the closing ceremony. It contains a long view for future development and showed a commitment to the Great Commission, calling for strategic and synergetic partnership.

Tokyo 2010 was an international event; but there was the “Last Mile Calling” (LMC) project to utilize digital means and internet venue ([www.lastmilecalling.org](http://www.lastmilecalling.org)) to form many “Tokyo 2010 communities” for information-sharing, ministry collaboration and strategic partnership.

### **Comparison between “Edinburgh 1910” with “Tokyo 2010”**

The similarities between “Edinburgh 1910” with “Tokyo 2010” are:

- Every major mission agency gathered together, representing every major sending mission to assess what remained to be done and make plans together to complete it.
- More than 1,000 mission leaders representing many countries came with one objective and question: What is going to take to complete world evangelization in our generation?
- More than 1,200 representatives in attendance
- No [Eastern Orthodox](#) or [Roman Catholic](#) missionary organizations were invited
- Mission made front and center in the life of the Church<sup>6</sup>

Figure 1 is a summary comparing “Edinburgh 1910” with “Tokyo 2010” indicating differences and progress:

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<sup>5</sup> See Enoch Wan, “Global people and diaspora missiology,” Tokyo 2010 Hand Book, 2010:92-100

<sup>6</sup>As the Archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, stated that “the place of missions in the life of the Church must be the central place, and none other: that is what matters.” See Kenneth R. Ross, “Edinburgh 1910 – Its Place in History,” [http://www.towards2010.org.uk/downloads\\_int/1910-PlaceHistory.pdf](http://www.towards2010.org.uk/downloads_int/1910-PlaceHistory.pdf) (retrieved May 22, 2010)

**Figure 1 - Comparing “Edinburgh 1910” with “Tokyo 2010” indicating differences and progress<sup>7</sup>**

ASPECT		“EDINBURGH 1910”	“TOKYO 2010”
Sponsorship and Endorsement		-primarily launched by the West -prior to the formation of WCC -preceded and birthed the ecumenical movement	-3 major networks & 16 evangelical missions -“Tokyo 2010 Declaration” endorsed and signed by representatives of two dozen plus evangelical mission organizations/entities with at a global scale
Venue & Time		the “Assembly Hall” of the “United Free Church of Scotland” –Edinburgh (Europe)	- Nakano Sun Plaza, Tokyo, May 11-14, 2010 (Asia), one hundred years after Edinburgh 1910
Delegates @ meeting		-Predominantly from the West & male: US & Britain 500 each, 170 - continental Europe, few from India, China & Japan. None from Africa & Latin America	-More than 2,000 mission leaders representing 140 countries of all continents with excellent representation from all over the world; male & female, young & old, thus indeed a global conference.
UPG		-99% UPG	-Less than 25% without indigenous church
Outreach		- heard the gospel and responded: few	-more than 100 yrs. Combined
Speed & Scale		-Took 1900 yrs. to reach 10% world population	-Less than 100 yrs. an additional 65% have been reached: 6 times as many in almost 1/20 time
G R O W T H	Latin America	-Less than 100,000; -of 800 PG: 750 UR	-150 million -of 800 PG: less than 300 UPG
	Africa	-1.6 million evangelical -of 2,800 PG, less than 100 R	-175+ million evangelical -of 2,800 PG, less than 1,000 UPG
	Asia & Pacific	-4 million evangelicals -of 4,500 PG in the region, >200 R	-200+ million evangelicals -of 4,500 PG in the region, 2,200 R
Ratio		-non-believers per believer: 20:1	-1970: non-believers per believer 13:1; 2010:7:1
Mission Sending		-EC sent 25,000 CCM -99% from the West	-EC sends 220,000 CCM -78% from non-Western world
Resources		-Ratio: 20 EC to reach every UPG -transportation: train and steam boat -no digital media nor data base	-EC to UPG:1970-150:1; 2010: 1,000:1 -rich data base, (LMC) “Last Mile Calling” for on-going collaboration & partnership
Approach		- Territorial idea, with an activist mentality & a military metaphor of Christian mission <sup>8</sup>	-diaspora mission: non-spatial and from everywhere to everywhere through diaspora groups. <sup>9</sup>
Center of Christianity		-Concentrated in Europe and North America: Western countries - focus: West & Northern hemisphere	-650 million evangelicals globally:80% in Asia, Africa & Latin America ->shifting Southward & decentralizing

NOTE: EC - evangelical churches; PG (people-group: U- unreached; R-reached); CCM (cross-cultural missionaries)

## Conclusion

Overall, the consultation was informative, insightful, and inspiring for delegates from many countries of all continents and at various levels of leadership, hopefully leading to multiple ways of post-conference action and partnership. There were logistical matters that had caused hardship among

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from “Opening Video Script,” Hand Book of Tokyo 2010, pages 8-9, with statistical sources from International Missions Board People Group Database, World Christian Database and USCWM Global Mission Database.

<sup>8</sup> For reference to the “territorial idea of Christian mission” with an activist mentality and a military metaphor of Christian mission see Kenneth R. Ross 2010:6-7.

<sup>9</sup> Enoch Wan, “Global people and diaspora missiology,” Tokyo 2010 Hand Book, 2010:92-100

some delegates who had lodging at small hotels at a long distance thus requiring time-consuming and tiring commute daily. The harsh reality of being under budget and under staff was caused by several factors, i.e. the untimely death of Ralph Winter - the key promoter, the relative small size of evangelical churches in Japan and lack of inclusive involvement of all evangelical Christian churches and leaders in Japan.

The hope of the planning committee of “Tokyo 2010” as shared by the thousand strong delegates at the great gathering and centennial celebration in Tokyo, from the historical perspective of Edinburgh 1910: “We are closer than ever to seeing its fulfillment (i.e. God’s promise to Abraham): representatives from every nation, tribe, people and language worshipping Jesus in spirit and in truth – from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> From “Opening Video Script,” Hand Book of Tokyo 2010, page 8, with the words added: (i.e. God’s promise to Abraham)